

**IN THE SPECIFICATION:**

A substitute specification and abstract is provided herewith to facilitate prosecution of the application. Additionally, a marked reproduction of the original specification and abstract, showing changes effected in the substitute specification and abstract, is submitted herewith.

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please substitute for corresponding pending claims the claims as shown rewritten below with amendments effected therein. Appendix I is attached hereto having marked versions of said claims with amendments indicated by brackets and underlining.

rule 126

<sup>29</sup>  
~~24.~~

(Amended) A wood component, comprising:

an article of wood including altered properties in geometrically defined near-surface areas as compared with an original state of the wood, said geometrically defined near-surface areas having properties of solidified wood melts substantially free from pyrolytic degradation products.

B2

<sup>30</sup>  
~~25.~~

(Amended) A wood component according to Claim <sup>29</sup>~~24~~, wherein the

geometrically defined near-surface areas include cell walls melted in one or several cutting directions so that a diffusion resistance in said geometrically defined areas

to ambient media is greater relative to that of the original state of the wood independent of the cutting direction.

*Rule 12b*  
<sup>31</sup><sub>26.</sub> (Amended) A wood component according to Claim <sup>29 30</sup>~~24~~ or ~~25~~, wherein said geometrically defined near-surface areas are visually different from non-melted wood in the original state with respect to optical properties, absorptivity, reflectivity and diffusing power, and thereby, luster.

*B2 Contd*  
<sup>32</sup><sub>27.</sub> (Amended) A wood component according to Claim <sup>29 30</sup>~~24~~ or ~~25~~, wherein the geometrically defined near-surface areas have a higher hardness and abrasion resistance than non-melted wood in the original state.

<sup>33</sup><sub>28.</sub> (Amended) A wood component according to Claim <sup>29 30</sup>~~24~~ or ~~25~~, wherein a deformation behavior in the geometrically defined near-surface areas is altered compared with non-melted wood in the original state.

<sup>34</sup><sub>29.</sub> (Amended) A wood component according to Claim <sup>29 30</sup>~~24~~ or ~~25~~, wherein a bulk of the solidified wood melt is in a geometrically defined area of the wood component below a surface thereof.

<sup>35</sup>  
~~30.~~

(Amended) A wood component according to Claim <sup>29</sup>~~24~~ or <sup>30</sup>~~25~~, wherein

at least one of physical chemical properties of the geometrically defined near-surface areas is altered from the original state by substances incorporated into the solidified wood melt.

<sup>36</sup>  
~~31.~~

(Amended) A wood component according to Claim <sup>35</sup>~~30~~, wherein the

incorporated substances are at least one of particles and pigments.